

What is Claimed is:

1. A patron service system for serving at least one patron of an establishment, said system comprising:

at least one patron station located in said establishment and configured to electronically display a plurality of menu items and electronically display at least one advertisement thereon, each patron station also being configured to receive order input from a patron corresponding to an order of at least one of said menu items; and

an establishment server in communication with each patron station, said establishment server being configured to receive and process said order input for later fulfillment of said order.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein said establishment server further includes a data base for storing a plurality of advertisements, and wherein said establishment server is further configured to select at least one advertisement from said plurality of stored advertisements, and communicate said at least one advertisement to each patron station for display thereon.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein said establishment server further includes means for changing the content of said advertising data base.

4. The system of claim 2 wherein said establishment server further comprises a processor and a stored program executed by said processor for selecting which advertisement is communicated to each patron station for display.

5. The system of claim 4 further comprising a central server in communication with a plurality of said establishment servers, said central server being configured to communicate a plurality of advertisements to each of said establishment servers for storage in their respective advertising data bases.

6. The system of claim 5 wherein said central server is further configured to communicate at least portions of said stored program to each of said establishment servers, said

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5 portions of said stored program being determinative of a methodology for selecting advertisements from the data base for communication to and display on each of said patron stations.

7. The system of claim 5 wherein each of said patron stations is further configured to receive demographic information from a patron and communicate said demographic information to said establishment server.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein said central server includes a database and wherein each of said establishment servers is further configured to accumulate and communicate demographic information to said central server for accumulation into said central server data base.

9. The system of claim 4 wherein said advertisement selection program is further configured to select at least one advertisement from said plurality of advertisements stored in said advertising data base to communicate to a patron station for display at least partially in response to a particular order input.

10. The system of claim 4 wherein said advertisement selection program is further configured to select at least one advertisement from said plurality of advertisements stored in said advertising data base to communicate to a patron station for display at least partially in response to a particular time of day.

11. The system of claim 15 wherein each patron station is further configured to (1) receive patron identity input from a patron corresponding to that patron's identity and (2) communicate said patron identity input to said establishment server, and wherein said advertisement selection program is further configured to select at least one advertisement from said plurality of advertisements stored in said advertising data base to communicate to a patron station for display at least partially in response to a particular patron identity input.

12. The system of claim 5 wherein each patron station is further configured to (1) receive advertisement selection input from a patron corresponding to a selection of an advertisement displayed thereon and (2) communicate said advertisement selection input to said establishment server for further processing thereby.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein said establishment server is further configured to store a plurality of advertisement supplements thereon, each advertisement supplement being associated with an advertisement stored in said advertising data base, said establishment server being further configured to communicate said advertisement supplement associated with a particular advertisement to a particular patron station for display thereon in response to that particular patron station receiving advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of that particular advertisement.

14. The system of claim 12 wherein said establishment server is further configured to link a particular patron station to a website associated with a particular advertisement in response to that particular patron station receiving advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of that particular advertisement.

15. The system of claim 12 wherein said establishment server is further configured to (1) store data corresponding to said advertisement selection input in an advertisement selection record, and (2) communicate said advertisement selection record to said central server.

16. The system of claim 2 wherein each patron station is further configured to (1) receive patron identity input from a patron corresponding to that patron's identity and (2) communicate said patron identity input to said establishment server for further processing thereby.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein said establishment server is further configured to create and store thereon a patron file for each different patron identity, said patron file

identifying at least one menu item ordered by said patron
5 corresponding to said patron identity.

18. The system of claim 17 wherein said establishment server
is further configured to communicate each patron file to said
central server.

19. The system of claim 17 wherein each patron station is
further configured to (1) receive advertisement selection
input from a patron having a patron file, said advertisement
selection input corresponding to a selection of an
5 advertisement displayed thereon and (2) communicate said
advertisement selection input to said establishment server,
and wherein said establishment server is further configured to
store said advertisement selection input in said patron file
corresponding to said patron from which said advertisement
10 selection input was received.

20. The system of claim 5 wherein said establishment server
is further configured to (1) store data corresponding to said
order input in an order record, and (2) communicate said order
record to said central server.

21. The system of claim 5 wherein said establishment server
is also in communication with a music playing device having a
plurality of selectable music items and configured to play any
of said music items upon selection, wherein each patron
5 station is further configured to receive music selection input
corresponding to a selection of at least one of said music
items, and wherein said establishment server is further
configured to send a signal to said music playing device
operative to initiate the playing of each selected music item
10 in response to said music selection input.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein said establishment server
is further configured to store said music selection input in a
music selection record and communicate said music selection
record to said central server.

23. The system of claim 21 wherein said establishment server
is further configured to select at least one advertisement
from said plurality of advertisements stored in said

5 advertising data base to communicate to a patron station for display at least partially in response to a particular music selection input.

24. In an establishment having at least one patron station located therein, said patron station having a display on which a plurality of selectable menu items are electronically displayed, said patron station being configured to receive
5 order input from a patron corresponding to an order of at least one of said menu items, said patron station also being in communication with an establishment server configured to receive and process said order input to enable subsequent fulfillment of said order, a method for delivering advertising
10 to patrons of said establishment, said method comprising:

electronically displaying at least one advertisement on the display of each patron station.

25. The method of claim 24 further comprising:

storing a plurality of advertisements on said establishment server; and

5 selecting at least one of said stored advertisements for communication to each patron station for display thereon.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said establishment has a plurality of said patron stations located therein, each patron station being in communication with said establishment server, said method further comprising:

5 for each patron station, selecting at least one advertisement to be communicated thereto from said establishment server by executing a program stored on said establishment server, said advertisement selection program comprising executable code corresponding to a plurality of
10 conditions under which said advertisements are to be selected; and

communicating to each patron station the advertisement selected therefor.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said establishment server is in communication with a central server by way of a network, said method further comprising:

receiving said plurality of advertisements on said
5 establishment server from said central server via said
network.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising:

receiving at least a portion of said advertisement
selection program on said establishment server from said
central server via said network; and

5 storing said received advertisement selection program on
said establishment server.

29. The method of claim 26 wherein said selecting step
includes:

for each patron station, selecting at least one
advertisement to be communicated thereto from said
5 establishment server at least partially in response to said
order input received by that patron station.

30. The method of claim 26 wherein said selecting step
includes:

for each patron station, selecting at least one
advertisement to be communicated thereto from said
5 establishment server at least partially in response to a
particular time of day.

31. The method of claim 26 wherein said selecting step
includes:

for each patron station, selecting at least one
advertisement to be communicated thereto from said
5 establishment server at least partially in response to a
predetermined condition.

32. The method of claim 26 wherein each patron station is
further configured to receive patron identity input from a
patron corresponding to a patron's identity, said method
further comprising:

5 receiving patron identity input on at least one patron
station; and

wherein said selecting step includes, for each patron
station that received patron identity input, selecting at
least one advertisement to be communicated thereto from said

10 establishment server at least partially in response to said patron identity input received by that patron station.

33. The method of claim 26 wherein each patron station is further configured to receive advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of a particular advertisement displayed thereon, said method further comprising:

5 storing a plurality of advertisement supplements on said establishment server, each advertisement supplement being associated with an advertisement stored thereon;

receiving advertisement selection input on at least one patron station; and

10 electronically displaying said advertisement supplement associated with said particular advertisement corresponding to said advertisement selection input on the display of the particular patron station that received said advertisement selection input.

34. The method of claim 26 wherein each patron station is further configured to receive advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of a particular advertisement displayed thereon, said method further comprising:

5 receiving advertisement selection input on at least one patron station;

connecting said establishment server to a website associated with a sponsor of the particular advertisement corresponding to said advertisement selection input; and

10 communicating said website to the patron station that received said advertisement selection input for display thereon.

35. The method of claim 27 wherein each patron station is further configured to receive advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of a particular advertisement displayed thereon, said method further comprising:

5 receiving advertisement selection input on a plurality of patron stations;

storing data corresponding to said received advertisement selection input in an advertisement selection record; and

communicating said advertisement selection record to said
10 central server via said network.

36. The method of claim 27 wherein said establishment server
is in communication with a music playing device having a
plurality of selectable music items and configured to play any
of said music items upon selection, and wherein each patron
5 station is configured to receive music selection input
corresponding to a selection of at least one of said music
items, said method further comprising:

receiving music selection input on at least one patron
station; and

10 sending a signal from said establishment server to said
music playing device operative to initiate the playing of
said selected music item.

37. The method of claim 36 further comprising:

storing data corresponding to said music selection input
in a music selection record; and

communicating said music selection record to said central
5 server via said network.

38. The method of claim 36 wherein said selecting step
includes, for each patron station that received said music
selection input, selecting at least one advertisement to be
communicated thereto from said establishment server at least
5 partially in response to said music selection input received
by that patron station.

39. The method of claim 27 wherein each patron station is
further configured to receive patron identity input
corresponding to a patron's identity, said method further
comprising:

5 receiving patron identity input on at least one patron
station;

storing data corresponding to said patron identity input
in a patron record; and

communicating said patron record to said central server
10 via said network.

40. The method of claim 39 wherein each patron station is further configured to receive advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of a particular advertisement, said method further comprising:

- 5 receiving advertisement selection input on said patron stations from a plurality of patrons;
associating said advertisement selection input with each patron from which it was received; and
storing data corresponding to said advertisement
10 selection input in said patron record for said patron associated therewith.

41. The method of claim 27 wherein said establishment server is also in communication with an establishment server input device, said method further comprising:

- 5 receiving patron identity input corresponding to a patron's identity on said establishment server input device from an authorized user;
storing data corresponding to said patron identity input in a patron record; and
sending said patron record to said central server via
10 said network.

42. The method of claim 27 further comprising:

- storing data corresponding to said order input in an order record;
communicating said order record to said central server
5 via said network.

43. The method of claim 42 wherein each patron station is further configured to receive advertisement selection input corresponding to a selection of a particular advertisement displayed thereon, said method further comprising:

- 5 receiving advertisement selection input on said patron stations from a plurality of patrons;
associating said advertisement selection input with an order also received on the patron station that received said advertisement selection input; and

10 storing data corresponding to said advertisement selection input in said order record for said order associated therewith.

44. The method of claim 27 further comprising:

storing inventory data on said establishment server, said inventory data corresponding to a supply of at least one of said menu items;

5 updating said inventory data at least partially in response to said received order inputs; and

determining at least partially from said inventory data whether an additional amount of said menu item corresponding to said inventory data is needed.

45. The method of claim 44 further comprising:

upon a determination being made that an additional amount of said menu item corresponding to said inventory data is needed, communicating a supply request over said network to a computer associated with a provider of said needed menu item and configured to receive and process said supply request.

5 46. In a system comprising a central server connected to a network, a plurality of establishment servers also connected to said network, and a plurality of patron stations, each establishment server being associated with at least one establishment, each patron station being connected to the establishment server associated with the establishment within which that patron station is located, each patron station having a display on which a plurality of selectable menu items and a plurality of advertisements are electronically

10 displayed, each patron station being configured to receive order input corresponding to an order of at least one of said menu items, each establishment server being configured to store a plurality of advertisements thereon and communicate at least one of said stored advertisements to each patron station

15 connected thereto for subsequent display on said patron station display, each establishment server also being configured to receive and process any order input received by each patron station to which it is connected to thereby enable

subsequent fulfillment of such orders, a method of controlling
 20 the advertisements displayed on the patron station displays of
 each patron station, said method comprising:

for each establishment server, communicating thereto for
 storage thereon a plurality of advertisements from said
 central server.

47. The method of claim 46 further comprising:

for each establishment server, communicating thereto for
 storage and execution thereon an advertisement selection
 5 program from said central server, each advertisement selection
 program comprising a plurality of rules defining a plurality
 of conditions under which said advertisements are to be
 displayed on the display of each patron station connected to
 that establishment server.

48. In an establishment having at least one patron station
 located therein, said patron station having a display on which
 a plurality of selectable menu items are electronically
 displayed, said patron station being configured to receive
 5 order input from a patron corresponding to an order of at
 least one of said menu items, said patron station also being
 in communication with an establishment server configured to
 receive and process said order input to enable subsequent
 fulfillment of said order, said establishment server also
 10 being configured to communicate a plurality of advertisements
 stored thereon to said patron station for display on said
 patron station display, (a method of controlling the
 advertisements displayed on said patron station display, said
 method comprising:

15 selecting an advertisement stored on said establishment
 server at least partially in response to a predetermined
 condition;

communicating said selected advertisement from said
 establishment server to said patron station; and

20 electronically displaying said selected advertisement on
 said patron station display.

49. The method of claim 48 wherein said selecting step includes:

associating an advertisement with a particular type of order input; and

- 5 selecting said associated advertisement at least partially in response to said type of order input being received by said patron station.

50. The method of claim 48 wherein said selecting step includes:

associating an advertisement with a particular time of day;

- 5 determining the time of day; and
selecting said associated advertisement at least partially in response to said time of day being determined.

51. The method of claim 48 further comprising:

storing an advertisement selection program on said establishment server, said advertisement selection program defining a plurality of conditions under which each
5 advertisement is to be selected; and

wherein said selecting step includes executing said advertisement selection program to thereby select an advertisement.

52. The method of claim 48 wherein said patron station is further configured to receive patron identity input corresponding to a patron's identity, said method further comprising receiving patron identity input on said patron

- 5 station, and wherein said selecting step includes (1) associating an advertisement with a particular type of patron identity input and (2) selecting said associated advertisement at least partially in response to said type of patron identity input being received by said patron station.

53. The method of claim 48 wherein said establishment server is in communication with a music playing device having a plurality of selectable music items and being configured to play any of said music items upon selection, said patron

- 5 station being further configured to receive music selection

input corresponding to a selection of at least one of said music items, and said establishment server being further configured to send a signal to said music playing device operative to play said music item corresponding to said music selection input received by said patron station, said method further comprising receiving music selection input on said patron station, and wherein said selecting step includes (1) associating an advertisement with at least one of said music items, and (2) selecting said associated advertisement when music selection input corresponding to that music item is received by said patron station.

54. A patron service system for serving patrons located in a plurality of establishments, said system comprising:

a central server connected to a network;

a plurality of establishment servers, each establishment server being connected to said network and being associated with at least one establishment; and

a plurality of patron stations, each patron station being located in an establishment and being connected to the establishment server associated with the establishment within which that patron station is located;

wherein each patron station has a display on which a plurality of selectable menu items and at least one advertisement are electronically displayed;

wherein each patron station is configured to receive order input corresponding to an order of at least one of said menu items;

wherein each establishment server is configured to receive and process the order input received by each patron station connected thereto for subsequent fulfillment of each order;

wherein said central server is configured to communicate a plurality of advertisements to each establishment server over said network;

wherein each establishment server is further configured
25 to store thereon the advertisements received from said central
server; and

wherein each establishment server is further configured
to communicate at least one of said advertisements stored
thereon to each patron station connected thereto for
30 subsequent display on thereon.

55. The system of claim 54 wherein each establishment server
has stored thereon an advertisement selection program which
upon execution is configured to select which of said stored
advertisements are to be provided to which of said patron
5 stations.

56. The system of claim 54 wherein said central server is
further configured to communicate at least a portion of an
advertisement selection program to each establishment server
over said network.